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International Chanteuse, Curious as Ever

Cyrille Aimée and the Surreal Band at Birdland

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The petite, curly-haired French jazz singer Cyrille Aimée and her sextet, the Surreal Band, performed a lighthearted mash-up of Gallic, Latin American, Brazilian and American jazz styles at Birdland on Wednesday evening that felt as personal as it did carefree. The voices inside Ms. Aimée, whose father is French and whose mother is Dominican, come from all over. One minute she is a French chanteuse, the next a playful salsa singer, the next she dabbles in Bobby McFerrin-like electronics with a loop pedal.



For all of her inflections, Ms. Aimée comes across as the opposite of a gimmicky, multiphrenic musical personality. Everything is connected and integrated into an internationalist concept of jazz that has no stylistic hierarchy. Curiosity and open-heartedness characterize singing that runs from adventurous, free-form scat to lightly torchy.

Wednesday's show began with a speedy, upbeat "September in the

Rain," one of several numbers in which her trumpeter, Wayne Tucker, and saxophonist, Matt Simons, played tag. Ms. Aimée is the opposite of a drama queen. A sweetly wistful "I'm Through With Love," with the pianist Assaf Glizner, whose playing is short on lyricism and heavy on percussive emphasis, left no dark emotional residue. "Through" meant "through."

Different numbers offered each musician a showcase. With the bassist Sam Anning, she sang Oscar Pettiford's "Triocotism." During "Under a Blanket of Blue," she was joined on vocals by Mr. Simons, who has a smooth, Mel Torme-like timbre. A flirtatious, Latin-flavored "Love for Sale" turned on the words "slightly soiled," sung with a saucy wink. Before the salsa-based "Oye Como Va," she noted her mother's presence in the audience.

"Caravan," the show's centerpiece, was a sultry immersion in exotica whose aura of romantic mystery was distilled by Mr. Tucker's muted trumpet, enhanced by Ms. Aimée's vocal curlicues and firmly grounded in Mal Stein's drumming. The wildly enthusiastic sold-out audience applauded every stylistic shift.

You might say that Ms. Aimée stands at a crossroads, but it's more like an intersection at which many highways converge.